

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

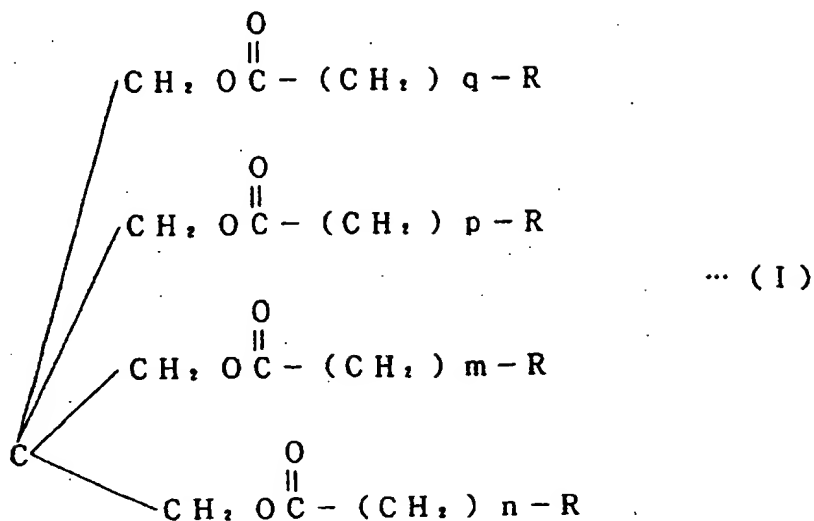
This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): An electrophotographic toner comprising a binder resin and a colorant, which is used in electrophotographic process employing a flash fixing system for fixation of a transferred toner image, wherein

the binder resin is a polyester resin, ~~formed by polymerizing terephthalic acid, isophthalic acid, or a mixture thereof as an acid component, an ethylene or propylene adduct of bisphenol A as an alcohol component and trimellitic acid as a crosslinking agent component,~~ which partially contains a chloroform-insoluble content; [[and]]

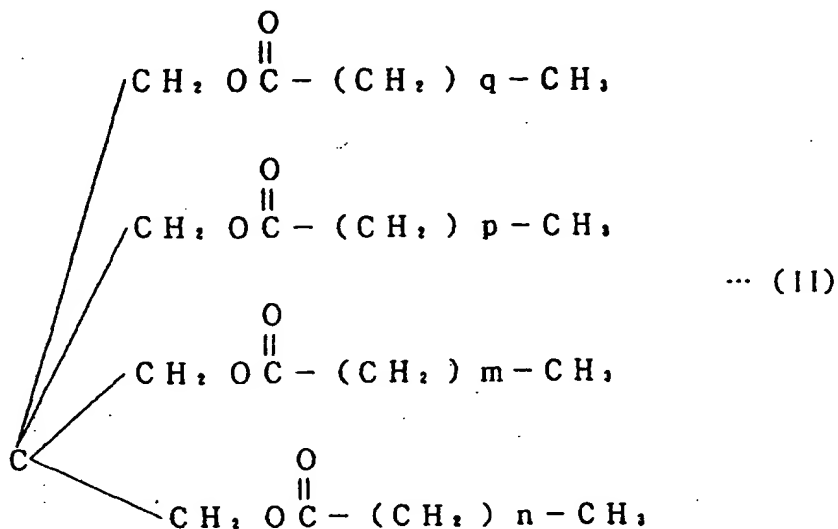
the toner contains a polypropylene resin and an ester component represented by the following formula (I):



wherein p, q, m and n each represents a positive integer of 16 to 22 and R may be the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and

the ester component (I) contains, as a principal component, a component which has a molecular weight distribution within a range from 1,200 to 1,500 in a molecular weight distribution as determined by mass spectrometric analysis and also has one peak in the range, while an ionization efficiency of a component having a molecular weight within a range from 1,420 to 1,430 is 45% or more and an ionization efficiency of a component having a molecular weight of 1,350 or less is 10% or more.

Claim 2 (previously presented): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 1, wherein the ester component (I) is represented by the following formula (II):



wherein p, q, m and n are as defined above, and the ester component has a weight-average molecular weight within a range from 1,350 to 1,450.

Claim 3 (original): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 1, wherein the number-average molecular weight of the polypropylene resin is 5,000 or more.

Claim 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 1, which contains the chloroform-insoluble content of the polyester resin in the amount within a range from

50 to 95% by weight based on the total weight of the toner, the polypropylene resin in the amount within a range from 0.1 to 5% by weight based on the total weight of the toner, and the ester component in the amount within a range from 0.5 to 15% by weight based on the total weight of the toner.

Claim 6 (withdrawn--currently amended): A method of forming an image by means of an electrophotographic process which comprises the steps of forming an electrostatic latent image by image exposure, visualizing the electrostatic latent image by development, transferring the visualized image onto the recording medium and fixing the transferred image, wherein

a developing agent containing the electrophotographic toner of any one of claims 1 to 3 and 5 is used in the step of developing the electrostatic latent image; and

a flash fixing system is used as the toner fixing system in the step of fixing the toner image after transferring the toner image, which has been visualized by the use of the developing agent, onto the recording medium.

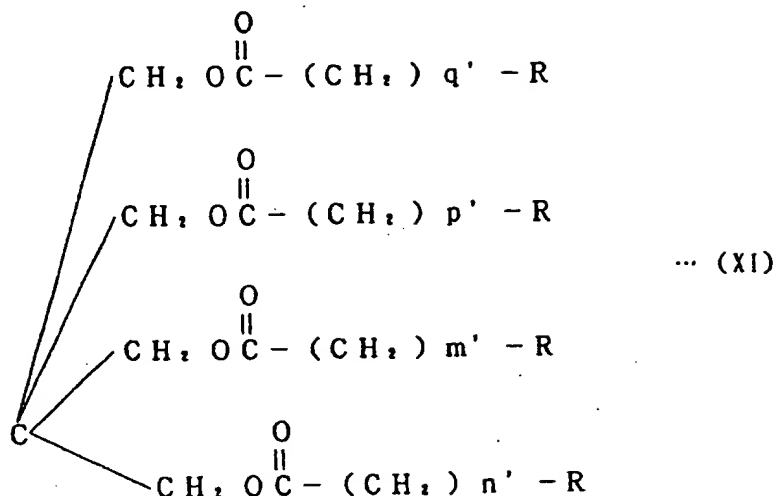
Claim 7 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to claim 6, wherein the developing agent is a two-component developing agent and contains a combination of the electrophotographic toner and a carrier prepared by coating the surface of a core material with a resin.

Claim 8 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to claim 7, wherein the resin-coated carrier contains doped manganese and/or doped strontium as a carrier core material and the surface of the carrier is coated with a coating agent containing a silicone resin as a principal component.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to claim 6, wherein the energy of the flashtube is within a range from 0.5 to 3.0 J/cm² and the duration of the flash is within a range from 500 to 3,000 μ s in the flash fixing step.

Claim 10 (currently amended): An electrophotographic toner comprising a binder resin and a colorant, which is used in electrophotographic process employing a flash fixing system for fixation of a transferred toner image, wherein

the binder resin is a polyester resin, ~~formed by polymerizing terephthalic acid, isophthalic acid, or a mixture thereof as an acid component, an ethylene or propylene adduct of bisphenol A as an alcohol component and trimellitic acid as a crosslinking agent component,~~ which contains an ester component represented by the following formula (XI):

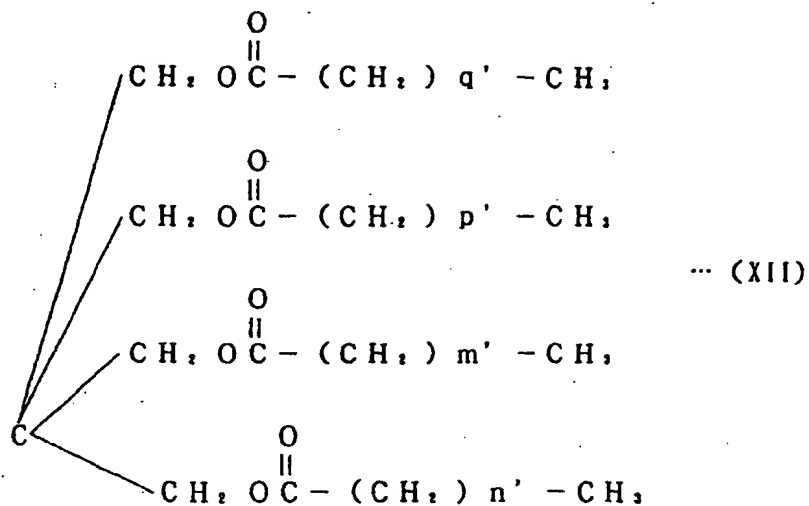


wherein p', q', m' and n' each represents a positive integer of 16 to 30 and R may be the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and contains at least a chloroform-insoluble content; [[and]]

said polyester resin contains the ester component (XI) in the amount within a range from 0.1 to 10% by weight based on the total weight of the toner and the chloroform-insoluble content in the amount within a range from 3 to 20% by weight based on the total weight of the toner; and

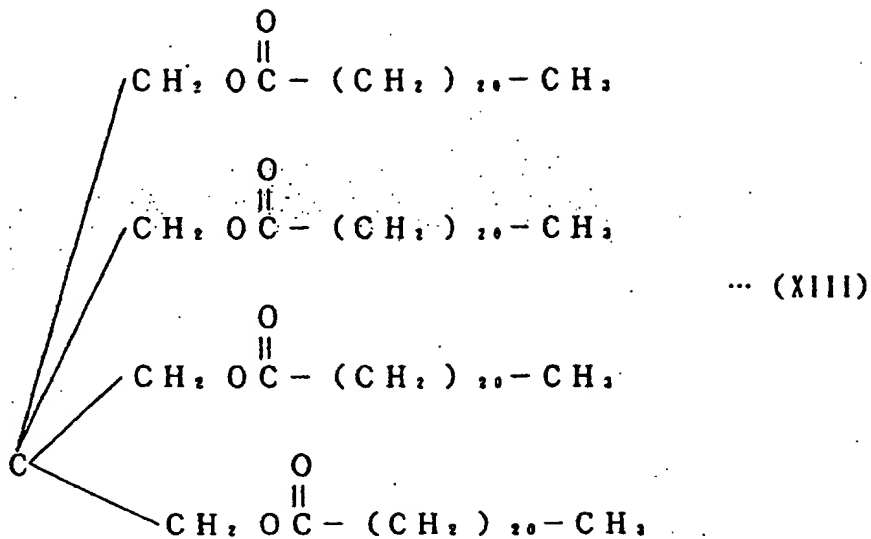
the toner optionally contains an ester component represented by the above formula (XI).

Claim 11 (original): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 10, wherein the ester component (XI) is represented by the following formula (XII):



wherein p', q', m' and n' are as defined above, and has a weight-average molecular weight within a range from 1,200 to 2,200.

Claim 12 (previously presented): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 11, wherein the ester component (XII) is represented by the following formula (XIII):



Claim 13 (original): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 10, wherein the ester component (XI) is introduced in the step of polymerizing the polyester resin.

Claim 14 (canceled)

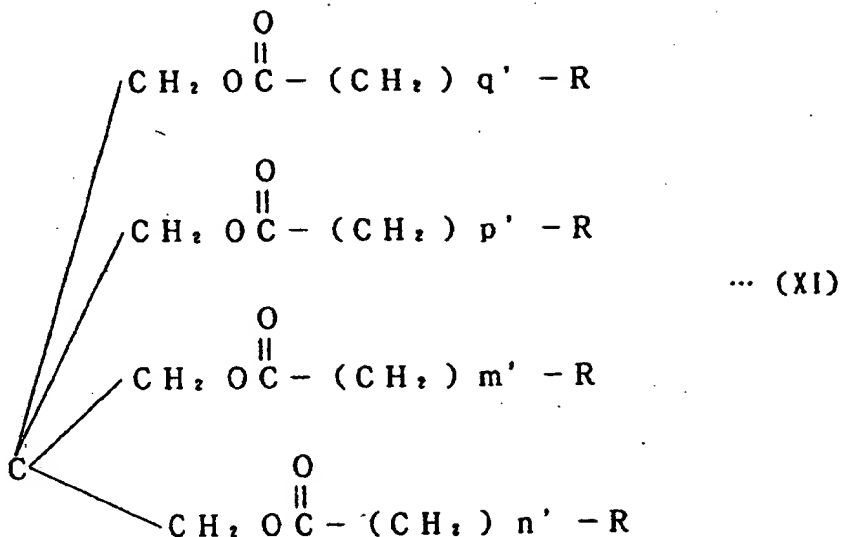
Claim 15 (original): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 10, wherein in said polyester resin, the ester component (XI) contains, as a principal component, a component which has a molecular weight distribution within a range from 1,200 to 2,200 in a molecular weight distribution as determined by mass spectrometric analysis and also has at least one maximum peak in the range, while an ionization efficiency of the maximum peak is 45% or more based on the entire component.

Claim 16 (currently amended): An electrophotographic toner according to any one of claims 10 to 13 and 15, which contains a polypropylene resin in the amount within a range from 0.1 to 5% by weight based on the total weight of the toner.

Claim 17 (original): An electrophotographic toner according to claim 16, wherein the number-average molecular weight of the polypropylene resin is 5,000 or more.

Claim 18 (currently amended): An electrophotographic toner comprising a binder resin and a colorant, which is used in electrophotographic process employing a flash fixing system for fixation of a transferred toner image, wherein

the binder resin is a polyester resin, ~~formed by polymerizing terephthalic acid, isophthalic acid, or a mixture thereof as an acid component, an ethylene or propylene adduct of bisphenol A as an alcohol component and trimellitic acid as a crosslinking agent component,~~ which contains an ester component represented by the following formula (XI):



wherein p', q', m' and n' each represents a positive integer of 16 to 30 and R may be the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and contains at least a chloroform-insoluble content;

said polyester resin contains the ester component (XI) in the amount within a range from 0.1 to 10% by weight based on the total weight of the toner and the chloroform-insoluble content in the amount within a range from 3 to 20% by weight based on the total weight of the toner;

the polyester resin contains at least a resin containing the ester component of the formula (XI) in the amount of 10% by weight or more; and

the toner optionally contains an ester component represented by the formula (XI).

Claim 19 (withdrawn): A method of forming an image by means of an electrophotographic

process which comprises the steps of forming an electrostatic latent image by image exposure, visualizing the electrostatic latent image by development, transferring the visualized image onto the recording medium and fixing the transferred image, wherein

a developing agent containing the electrophotographic toner of claim 10 is used in the step of developing the electrostatic latent image; and

a flash fixing system is used as the toner fixing system in the step of fixing the toner image after transferring the toner image, which has been visualized by the use of the developing agent, onto the recording medium.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to claim 19, wherein the developing agent is a two-component developing agent and contains a combination of the electrophotographic toner and a carrier prepared by coating the surface of a core material with a resin.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to claim 20, wherein the resin-coated carrier contains doped manganese and/or doped strontium as a carrier core material and the surface of the carrier is coated with a coating agent containing a silicone resin as a principal component.

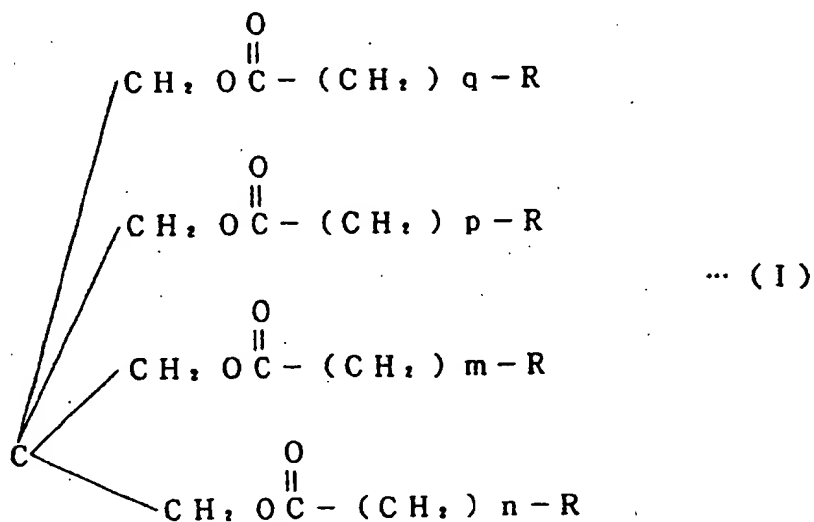
Claim 22 (withdrawn): An image forming method according to any one of claims 19 to 21,

wherein the energy of the flashtube is within a range from 0.5 to 3.0 J/cm² and duration of the flashlight is within a range from 500 to 3,000 μs in the flash fixing step.

Claim 23 (new): An electrophotographic toner comprising a binder resin and a colorant, which is used in electrophotographic process employing a flash fixing system for fixation of a transferred toner image, wherein

the binder resin is a polyester resin which partially contains a chloroform-insoluble content,

the toner contains a polypropylene resin and an ester component represented by the following formula (I):

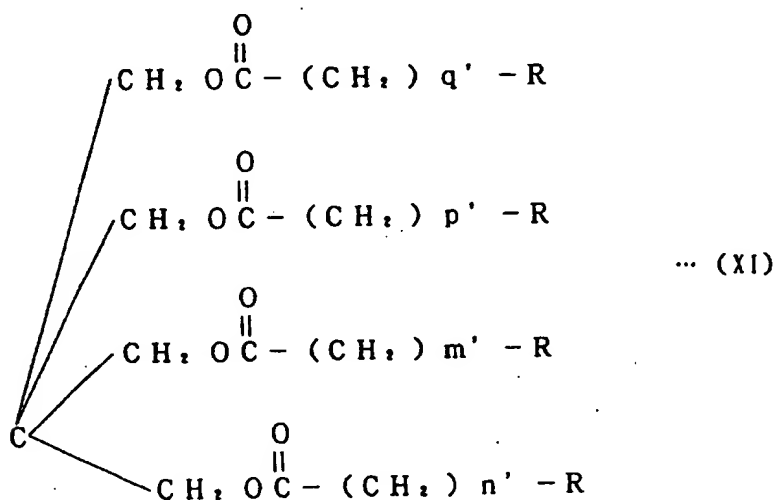


wherein p, q, m and n each represents a positive integer of 16 to 22 and R may be the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and

wherein the toner contains the chloroform-insoluble content of the polyester resin in the amount within a range from 50 to 95% by weight based on the total weight of the toner, the polypropylene resin in the amount within a range from 0.1 to 5% by weight based on the total weight of the toner, and the ester component in the amount within a range from 0.5 to 15% by weight based on the total weight of the toner.

Claim 24 (new): An electrophotographic toner comprising a binder resin and a colorant, which is used in electrophotographic process employing a flash fixing system for fixation of a transferred toner image, wherein

the binder resin is a polyester resin which contains an ester component represented by the following formula (XI):



wherein p', q', m' and n' each represents a positive integer of 16 to 30 and R may be the same or different and each represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group having 1 to 4 carbon atoms, and contains at least a chloroform-insoluble content,

the toner optionally contains an ester component represented by the above formula (XI),
and

in said polyester resin, the ester component (XI) contains, as a principal component, a component which has a molecular weight distribution within a range from 1,200 to 2,200 in a molecular weight distribution as determined by mass spectrometric analysis and also has at least one maximum peak in the range, while an ionization efficiency of the maximum peak is 45% or more based on the entire component.